



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Dr. Tom W. Kimbrell, Commissioner

Contact: Phyllis Stewart, Chief of Staff | 501-683-4788 | phyllis.stewart@arkansas.gov

NEWS RELEASE

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ACT Scores Show Gains

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas's ACT scores saw an increase according to the 2012 ACT report. Eighty-eight (88) percent of Arkansas's 2012 graduating seniors took the ACT and had an average composite score of 20.3, up from 19.9 last year. The national average composite score was 21.1, the same as in 2012.

"Arkansas continues to see improvement in ACT scores," said Education Commissioner Dr. Tom Kimbrell. "The scores show our students are making incremental progress in getting ready for college, but there's still significant work to do to ensure the state's graduates can compete for jobs in a global economy."

According to the 2012 ACT report:

- Arkansas's African American students had an average composite score of 16.9, up .3 compared to 2011.
- Arkansas's Hispanic/Latino students had an average composite score of 18.7, up .2 compared to 2011.
- Arkansas's Caucasian students had an average composite score of 21.4, up .3 compared to 2011.

The ACT is a curriculum-based achievement test designed to measure college readiness and preparation. The ACT includes four separate exams in English, reading, mathematics and science. There is also an optional writing portion. The exam is scored on a scale from 0 to 36.

College and Career Readiness

The report provides strong evidence that Arkansas is making the right moves in education by setting higher standards and raising expectations.

According to the ACT, 19 percent of Arkansas seniors demonstrated college-readiness in all four areas of the test. Nationally, 25 percent of ACT test-takers demonstrated college-readiness.

The ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, which are based on the actual grades earned by students in college, define college and career readiness and report student performance results relative to that goal.

Common Core Standards

The ACT results come at a time when much focus is on the implementation of new college and career readiness standards. The State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards in July 2010. Those new learning standards are being implemented in Arkansas schools Grades K-8. Next year, the state will add Grades 9-12 to that process with full implementation in 2014-15.

"It's encouraging to see the positive trend continuing, with more high school graduates showing they are

ready to succeed academically at the next level,” said Kimbrell. “Although growth has been slow, things appear to be moving in the right direction.”

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Arkansas Department of Education | Four Capitol Mall | Little Rock, AR 72201

